

# **The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company**

**Akron , Ohio 44316 - 0001**

**Statement for the Record  
Joseph Copeland, Vice President  
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company  
Before the  
Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection  
Homeland Security Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Wednesday, June 25, 2008**

Goodyear appreciates the opportunity to submit this brief statement for the record of the hearing before the House Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection of the Committee on Homeland Security entitled "The Goodyear Explosion: Ensuring Our Nation is Secure by Developing A Risk Management Framework for Homeland Security." We want to express our heartfelt condolences to the McInnis family and friends for their tragic loss, and to assure the Committee, as we have the Chairwoman, our employees and our community, that we are cooperating fully with all ongoing investigations of the accident by our company and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and will be available to discuss their findings when the investigations are complete. In light of the brief passage of time since the accident 14 days ago, and these ongoing investigations, it would be inappropriate for us to speculate at the hearing today. Since witnesses may be offering opinions on this matter at the hearing, we ask that the following brief statement by Goodyear be included in today's hearing record.

On the morning of June 11, an explosion occurred at the Goodyear chemical plant in Houston, killing longtime Goodyear associate Gloria McInnis and injuring six other workers. The explosion, which appears to have been caused by the build-up of pressure in a device called a heat exchanger, also resulted in the release of ammonia in the immediate vicinity and required us to evacuate associates and contractors from the entire site.

As required by our safety protocols, emergency response coordinators began accounting for everyone who was onsite at the time of the explosion. In fact, Mrs. McInnis was an emergency response coordinator and therefore would not have been evacuated off the plant property, but would have worked with other coordinators to respond to the emergency. Unfortunately, the shift foreman responsible for accounting for Mrs. McInnis' whereabouts mistakenly attributed a telephone conversation he had with Mrs. McInnis moments before the explosion as occurring after the explosion. He wrongly marked Mrs. McInnis as accounted for and assumed she was attending to duties elsewhere onsite. That incorrect assessment resulted in the Goodyear plant manager making an inaccurate statement to the public, and Goodyear and the plant manager sincerely apologize to the community and to the McInnis family in particular.

Later in the morning, it was deemed safe for associates to return to work in other areas of the plant, but not the area in the immediate vicinity of the explosion. When work crews were able to access that area and inspect it more thoroughly, they tragically found Mrs. McInnis' body.

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During the course of the day, investigators from multiple agencies – OSHA, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and others – visited the site or made inquiries. As this has been deemed an industrial accident and not a matter of homeland security, OSHA has assumed jurisdiction over the investigation. That investigation is ongoing, and Goodyear is cooperating fully.

Goodyear's Houston team was shaken to its core by Mrs. McInnis' death and the injuries to another Goodyear associate and several contractors. Mrs. McInnis was a well-liked and hard-working associate who had been with the company for 31 years. Like Mrs. McInnis, a high percentage of our associates in Houston have worked at the plant for decades and they know each other quite well. Goodyear immediately offered grief counseling services to all who needed it.

Despite some media reports to the contrary, Goodyear officials made multiple attempts to reach out to the family. After the McInnis family retained an attorney, the attorney required all attempts to communicate with the family go through him. Company officials extended their condolences and requested permission to attend the funeral. In addition, the company offered to pay for the funeral and to use its government relations team to help get Mrs. McInnis' son returned from Iraq for the funeral. Our human resources department immediately began processing the necessary paperwork to ensure that the family members receive all the benefits that they are entitled to. Her coworkers created a memorial to Mrs. McInnis at the plant, held a plant-wide moment of silence in her memory and even collected donations for the family.

Goodyear itself is conducting an investigation into whether individuals adhered to our safety and security protocols before and after the explosion. At this point, we do know that our security system was not compromised and no unauthorized individuals were on the site at the time of the explosion.

As for safety protocols, Goodyear works hard to eliminate injuries of any degree through its "No One Gets Hurt" safety initiative. The initiative includes educating all associates about our safety protocols and conducting drills to ensure that associates know what they are to do in case of an emergency. In fact, the initiatives have been so successful that OSHA recordable incidents – meaning injuries of any type, large or small – at the Houston plant dropped from 67 in 2000 to just 7 last year. We have seen similar improvements companywide, and we have set even more aggressive goals to reduce workplace accidents and injuries. This is another reason why Mrs. McInnis' death and the injuries to the other workers are so devastating to the Goodyear family.

Our investigation into what caused the pressure to build up in the heat exchanger and the aftermath is continuing. Therefore, it is premature for us to speculate on the cause. We have committed to cooperating fully with the Committee, and we will provide our findings at the appropriate time.

In the meantime, we are grateful that the last two injured workers have been released from local hospitals. And we again want to extend our apologies to our community for the mistaken initial reports and our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. McInnis' family and friends for their loss.